
Stories of Hope - Multiple Sclerosis



Nan Luke was hitting her stride. Just shy of her 30th birthday, her law career was blooming, and she was in love.

Then one day the left side of her body went numb from the sole of her foot to the middle of her chin, leaving her with the constant tingle of a sleeping limb.

She had multiple sclerosis, her doctor said. Nothing could be done.

She spent a decade in denial, hiding the symptoms of her immune system's assault on the fatty layer that sheaths each nerve. Finally, she began treatment. It slowed the disease, but didn't stop it. She'd lose sight in one eye temporarily and suffer excruciating fatigue. Eventually, she lost muscle control in her midsection and, with it, control of bladder and bowel functions. The lesions in her brain grew.

As she came to grips with MS, Nan decided she wanted to help others going through what she had experienced, and so she became a patient advocate. In that role, she learned about investigations into stem cell therapies that offered promise not just for MS, but for Parkinson's and Alzheimer's and more.

"That was like an epiphany. Suddenly my eyes were open to the basic science and the basic research and the basic possibilities of life saving and quality-of-life changing treatments."

"I cannot tell you how excited I am," she said. "Researchers rock."

- Watch the Spotlight on multiple sclerosis talks

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